

Vol. 514 Rs. 25

Tales of Durga

Amar Chitra Katha: the Glorious Heritage of India



Tales of Durga

Goddess Durga is as widely worshipped as Vishnu and Shiva. She is the fierce form of Devi who, as Shakti, is considered the personification of universal energy. According to the Devi Bhagavata the Universe is but Her manifestation – and even Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva worship Her. Durga is worshipped in sixty-four forms as Ambika, Kali, Chamundi, Devi, Uma, etc.

The worship of Durga is supposed to be more than 4,000 years old in India. The names of Uma and Parvati occur in the Taittiriya Aranyaka and the Kena Upanishad. Some Indologists are of the opinion that the figure seated on a lion in the coins of Azes I, the Shaka ruler (c. 5 B.C. to A.D. 30), represents Ambika or Durga.

Durga is worshipped in one form or another in almost every Indian village.

This Amar Chitra Katha is based on the Durga-Saptashati of the Markandeya Purana.



Script: Subba Rao *Artwork: Souren Roy*

Editor **: Anant Pai**

 • Reprinted September, 1998. ISBN 81-7508-129-5
Published by Anant Pai for India Book House Limited, Fleet Bldg, Mathuradas Vasanji Road, Marol Naka, Andheri (East), Mumbai - 400 059 and printed by him at Trinity Art-n-Print, A/57, 1st Floor, Bhandup Industrial Estate, Pannalal Silk Mills Compound, L. B. S. Marg, Bhandup (W), Mumbai - 400 078.

DURGA – THE SLAYER OF MAHISHA



THE ASURA, MAHISHA, ONCE PERFORMED SEVERE PENANCES TO PROPITIATE BRAHMA. PLEASED WITH HIS AUSTERITIES, BRAHMA APPEARED BEFORE HIM.



MAHISHA BECAME THOUGHTFUL.

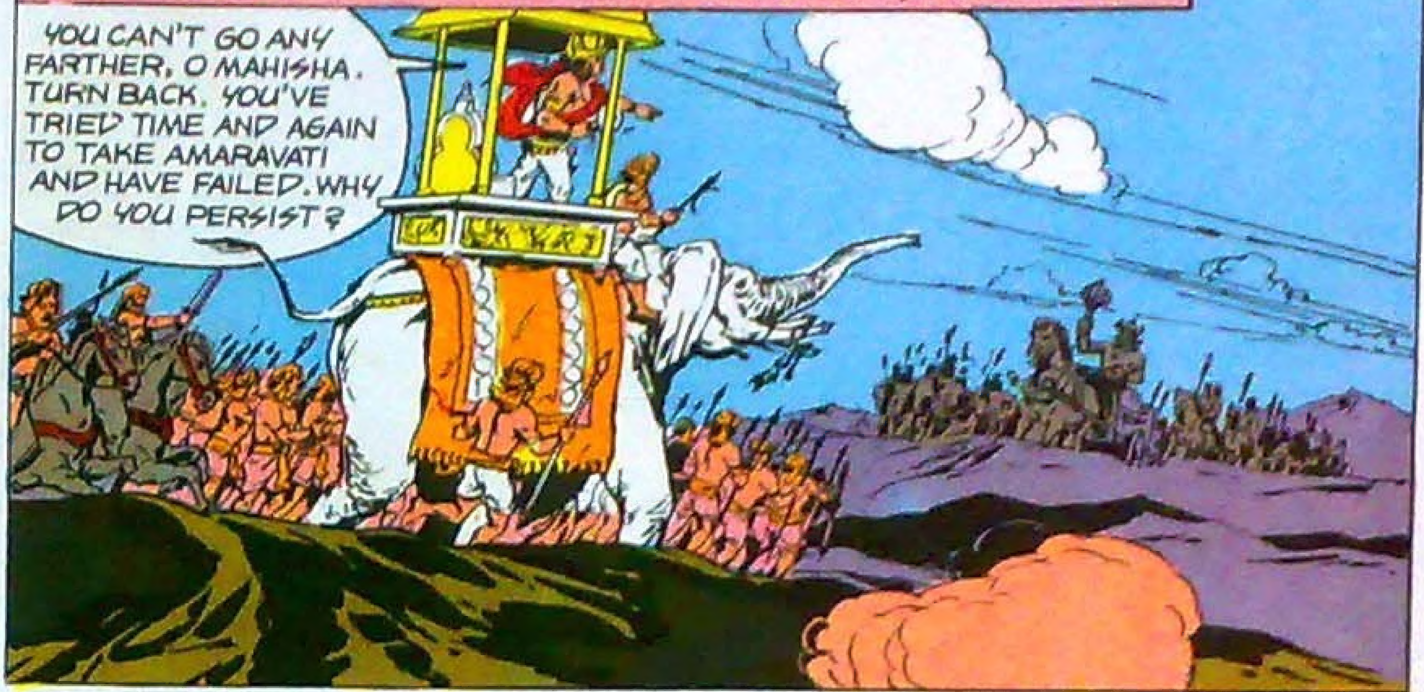



IF I MUST DIE, LORD, LET IT BE AT THE HANDS OF A WOMAN.
SO BE IT.

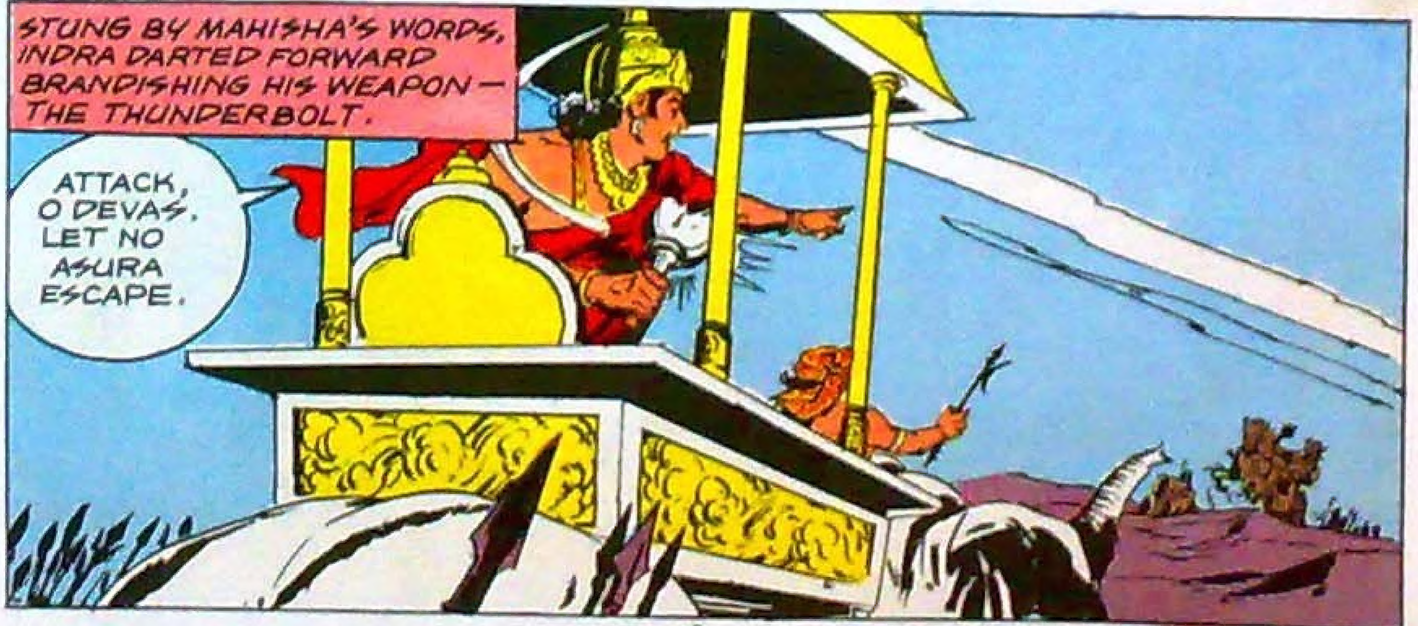

AS BRAHMA LEFT FOR HIS ABODE —
HOW CAN A WOMAN, A HELPLESS CREATURE, KILL ME ? YOU HAVE AS GOOD AS GRANTED ME THE BOON OF IMMORTALITY !

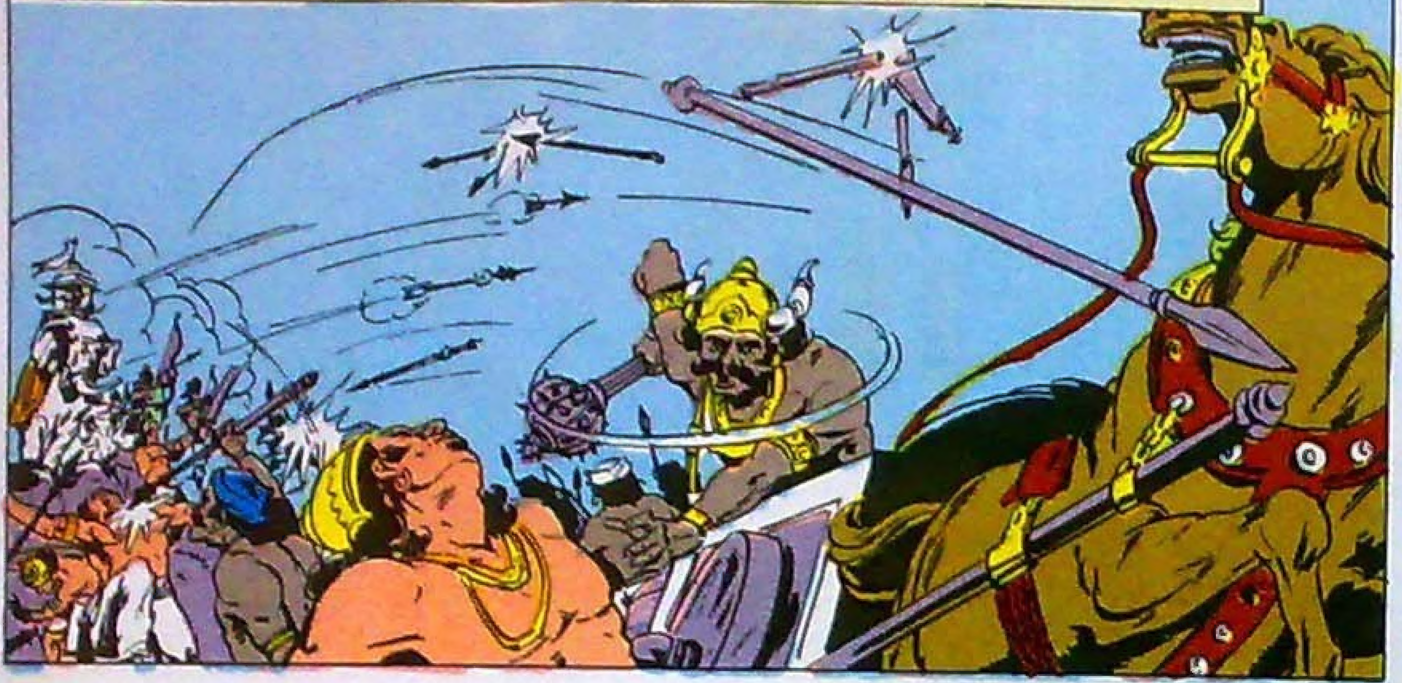

JUBILANTLY, MAHISHA HURRIED BACK TO THE NETHER WORLD AND HIS MEN.
FROM NOW ON, THE DEVAS ARE POWERLESS AGAINST ME. ON TO HEAVEN !
VICTORY TO MAHISHA ASURA !

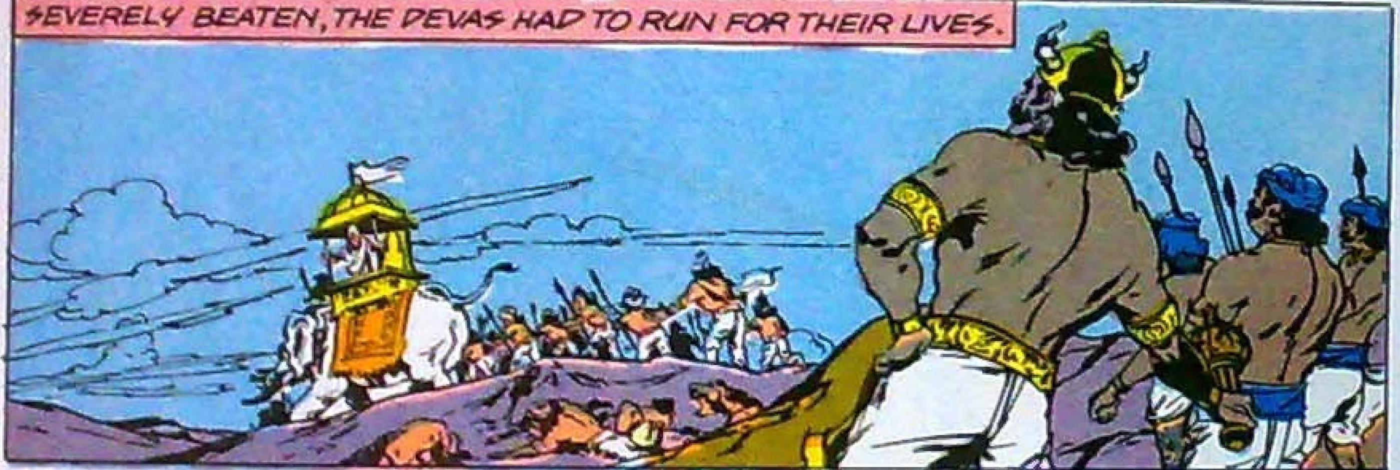

AS MAHISHA AND HIS ARMY APPROACHED HEAVEN —
THE ASURAS ! QUICK ! INDRA MUST BE INFORMED !

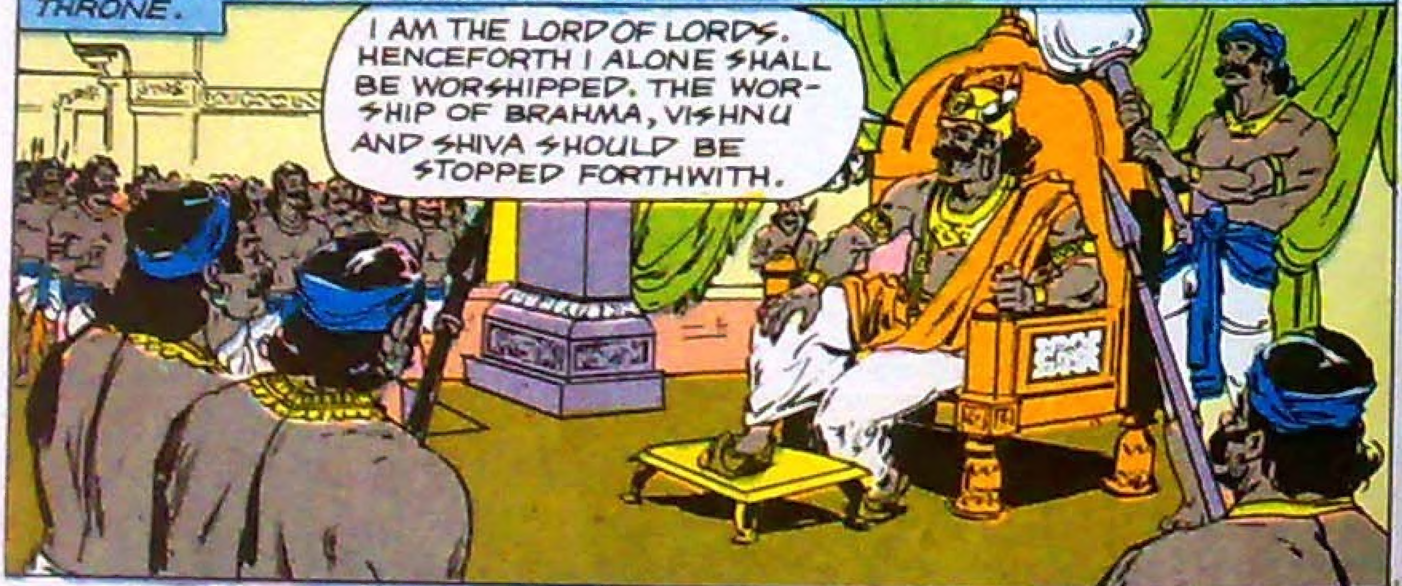

A LITTLE LATER, INDRA RUSHED OUT OF AMARAVATI, HIS CAPITAL.
YOU CAN'T GO ANY FARTHER, O MAHISHA. TURN BACK. YOU'VE TRIED TIME AND AGAIN TO TAKE AMARAVATI AND HAVE FAILED. WHY DO YOU PERSIST?


INDRA, I'VE COME TO FIGHT, NOT TO TALK. USE YOUR WEAPONS INSTEAD OF YOUR TONGUE!


STUNG BY MAHISHA'S WORDS, INDRA DARTED FORWARD BRANDISHING HIS WEAPON — THE THUNDERBOLT.
ATTACK, O DEVAS. LET NO ASURA ESCAPE.


THEN ENSUED A FIERCE BATTLE BETWEEN THE DEVAS AND THE ASURAS.


SEVERELY BEATEN, THE DEVAS HAD TO RUN FOR THEIR LIVES.


AFTER DRIVING THE DEVAS OUT OF AMARAVATI, MAHISHA ASCENDED INDRA'S THRONE.
I AM THE LORD OF LORDS. HENCEFORTH I ALONE SHALL BE WORSHIPPED. THE WORSHIP OF BRAHMA, VISHNU AND SHIVA SHOULD BE STOPPED FORTHWITH.









* A FORM IN WHICH SHIVA IS WORSHIPPED

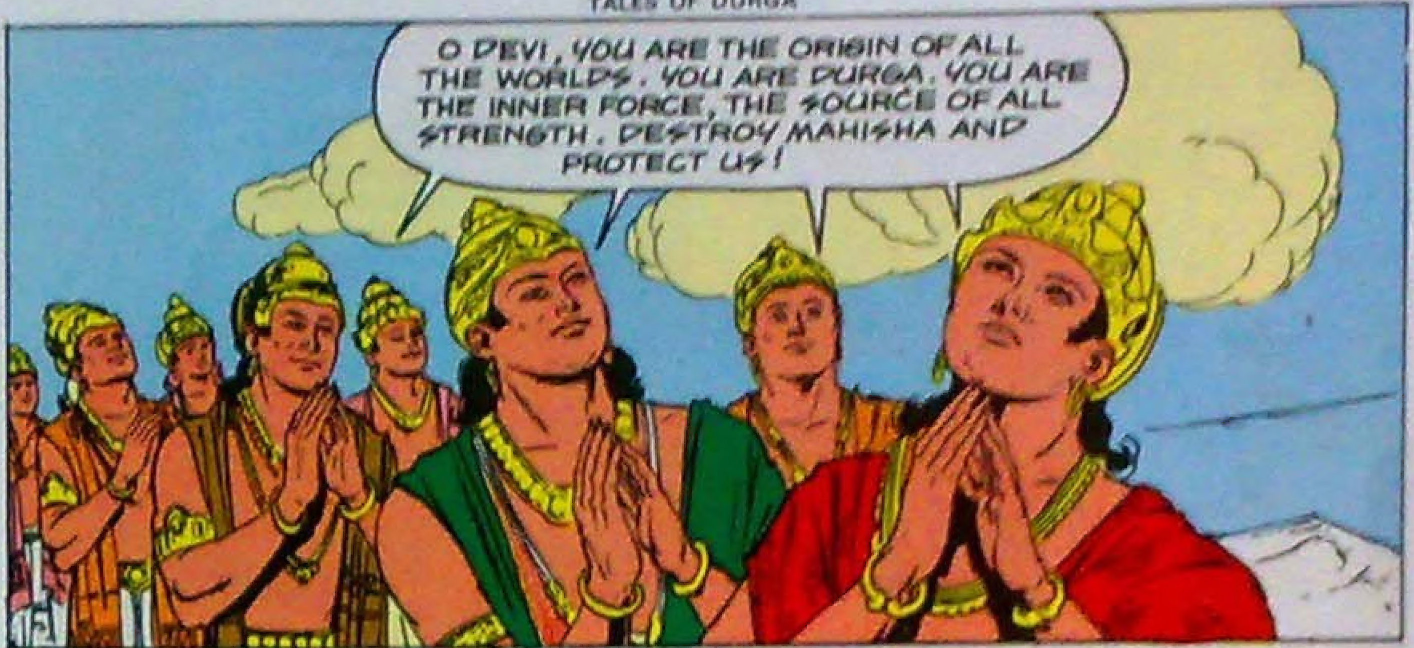
MEANWHILE, UNKNOWN TO THEM, THE DEVAS HAD ALREADY ASSEMBLED AT KAILAS, THE ABODE OF LORD SHIVA.



EVEN AS THE DEVAS SPOKE, AN INTENSE LIGHT ISSUED FORTH FROM THE ENRAGED FACES OF SHIVA, VISHNU AND BRAHMA.



IT WAS JOINED BY SIMILAR RAYS OF LIGHT FROM INDRA AND OTHER DEVAS. AND LO! THE NEXT MOMENT, OUT OF THAT LIGHT A FEMALE FORM WITH A THOUSAND ARMS CAME INTO BEING! IT WAS DEVI DURGA.

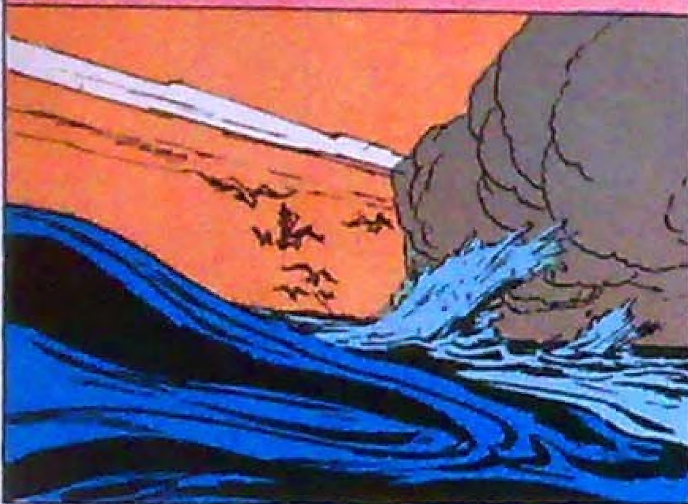

O DEVI, YOU ARE THE ORIGIN OF ALL THE WORLDS. YOU ARE DURGA. YOU ARE THE INNER FORCE, THE SOURCE OF ALL STRENGTH. DESTROY MAHISHA AND PROTECT US!


SHIVA DREW FORTH A TRIDENT FROM HIS OWN TRIDENT...


...AND OFFERED IT TO DURGA.


VISHNU AND OTHER DEVAS, TOO, OFFERED WEAPONS TO DURGA.
O DEVI, ACCEPT THIS DISCUS
— AND THIS THUNDERBOLT.


ARMED WITH THE CELESTIAL WEAPONS AND MOUNTED ON A LION, DURGA EMITTED A BLOOD-CURDLING ROAR.
I'LL SEEK OUT AND DESTROY THE EVIL MAHISHA.


THE SEAS TREMBLED...


...THE EARTH SHOOK AND THE MOUNTAINS ROCKED.


MAHISHA'S HEART MISSED A BEAT.
WHAT'S THAT ?

HE RUSHED OUT OF HIS PALACE TO FIND OUT.

HO! A MERE FEMALE!






AS THE ASURAS HURLED VARIOUS WEAPONS AT HER, DURGA BREATHED HARD.


AS SHE BREATHED, THOUSANDS OF SOLDIERS CAME INTO BEING AND FOUGHT AT HER SIDE.

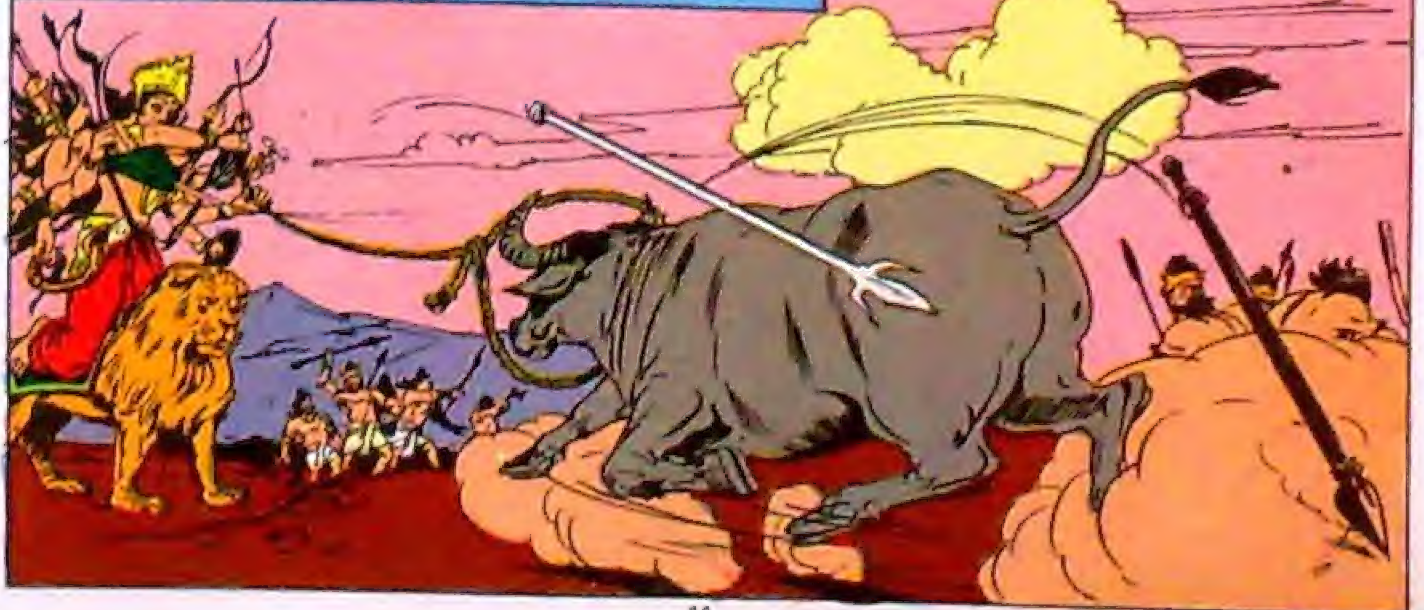

HER MOUNT STRODE THROUGH MAHISHA'S ARMY, DESTROYING THOUSANDS OF ASURAS.


MAHISHA SEETHED WITH FURY.
I'LL ANNIHILATE THIS MONSTER AND HER HORDES.


ASSUMING THE FORM OF A BUFFALO, MAHISHA CHARGED FORTH SNORTING AND BELLOWING.


HE TRAMPLED UPON DURGA'S MEN . . .


. . . AND LASHED AT THEM WITH HIS TAIL .


ENRAGED, DURGA FLUNG A NOOSE AT HIM .


MAHISHA SHOOK HIMSELF WITH ALL HIS MIGHT . . .


. . . TRANSFORMED HIMSELF INTO A LION AND POUNCED UPON DURGA .


AS DURGA CHOPPED OFF THE HEAD OF THE LION . . .


. . . MAHISHA ROSE IN HIS OWN FORM AND CHARGED .


LATER HE ASSUMED THE FORM OF AN ELEPHANT AND TUGGED AT DURGA'S MOUNT WITH HIS TRUNK.


DURGA LOPPED OFF THE TRUNK WITH HER SWORD.


MAHISHA AGAIN ASSUMED THE FORM OF A BUFFALO AND SNORTED WITH RAGE.





BUT DURGA LEAPT UPON HIM AND PINNED HIM DOWN.



THE NEXT MOMENT, MAHISHA FELL DEAD, AT THE FOOT OF DURGA. THE DEVAS WERE OVERJOYED.

O DURGA, UPHOLDER OF VIRTUE, DESTROYER OF EVIL, WE HUMBLY SALUTE YOU! O DEVI, CONTINUE TO PROTECT US!

CHAMUNDI

ON ANOTHER OCCASION, THE DEVAS WERE DRIVEN OUT OF HEAVEN BY SHUMBHA, THE LORD OF THE ASURAS.



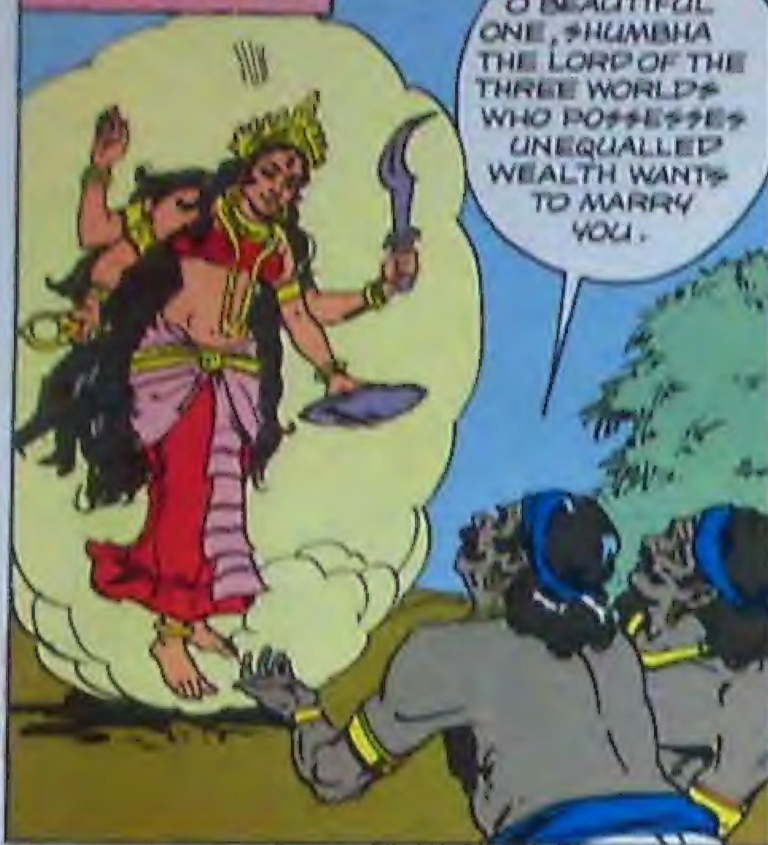








* AN INCARNATION OF DURGA


CHANDA AND MUNDA RUSHED BACK TO MOUNT HIMAVAT.
O BEAUTIFUL ONE, SHUMBHA THE LORD OF THE THREE WORLDS WHO POSSESSES UNEQUALLED WEALTH WANTS TO MARRY YOU.


I'VE TAKEN A VOW THAT I'LL MARRY ONLY HIM WHO CAN CONQUER ME IN BATTLE AND HUMBLE MY PRIDE.


DO YOU SEEK TO BATTLE WITH THE GREAT ASURA WHO HAS VAN-QUISHED EVEN THE DEVAS? BE WISE AND SUBMIT GRACEFULLY TO OUR MASTER.


I KNOW I AM FOOLISH BUT I AM BOUND BY THE ILL-CONSIDERED VOW TAKEN LONG AGO.
WE'LL INFORM OUR MASTER.

WHEN CHANDA AND MUNDA CONVEYED AMBIKA'S MESSAGE TO SHUMBHA —

IF IT'S BATTLE SHE WANTS, SHE SHALL HAVE IT.

THEN HE TURNED TO ANOTHER OF HIS COMMANDERS, DHUMRALOCHANA.

GO, AND BRING HER TO ME.

DHUMRALOCHANA TOOK AN ARMY TO MOUNT HIMAVAT AND CONFRONTED AMBIKA.

IF YOU DON'T GO TO MY LORD, OF YOUR OWN FREE WILL, I'LL HAVE TO TAKE YOU TO HIM BY FORCE.

AMBIKA PRETENDED TO BE AFRAID.

ALAS! SPARE ME. I AM A HELPLESS WOMAN.

THEN MARRY OUR LORD!

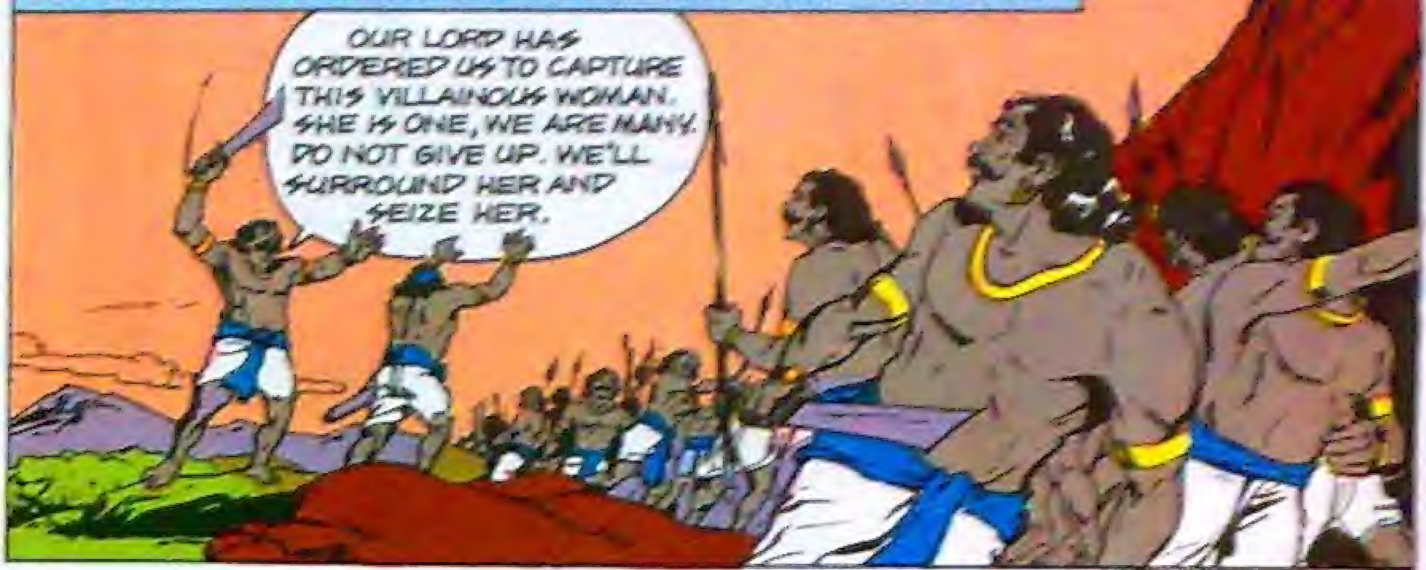
MY VOW DOES NOT PERMIT ME TO MARRY HIM WITH-OUT FIGHTING HIM.


WITHOUT WASTING ANOTHER WORD, DHUMRALOCHANA RUSHED TOWARDS HER.


WITH UTTER CONTEMPT FOR THE ASURA, AMBIKA UTTERED A SINGLE SYLLABLE.
HUM!


THE NEXT MOMENT, A HANDFUL OF ASHES SMOULDERED WHERE THE MIGHTY ASURA ONCE STOOD.


FLEE!
FLEE!









* AN INCARNATION OF DURGA


. . . AND CHARGED AT THE ASURAS.


SNATCHING AN ELEPHANT WITH ONE HAND. . .


. . . SHE HURLED IT AT THE ASURAS AND CRUSHED THEM TO DEATH.


CHANDA RUSHED AT KALI.
I WILL KILL YOU AND PROVIDE A FEAST FOR THE VULTURES!


KALI SEIZED HIM BY THE HAIR . . .
. . . AND BEHEADED HIM.


BLIND WITH FURY, MUNDA RUSHED FORTH..
..ONLY TO MEET WITH THE SAME FATE!


AMBIKA SMILED AT KALI.
YOU HAVE KILLED CHANDA AND MUNDA. HENCEFORTH YOU SHALL ALSO BE KNOWN AS CHAMUNDI.

HOW DURGA SLEW SHUMBHA



THEN THE SHAKTIS — THE INNER FORCE OF VARIOUS GODS — ISSUED FORTH ASSUMING FEMALE FORMS*. OUT OF BRAHMA EMERGED BRAHMANI ...

* EACH OF THESE FORMS IS CONSIDERED TO BE AN INCARNATION OF DURGA

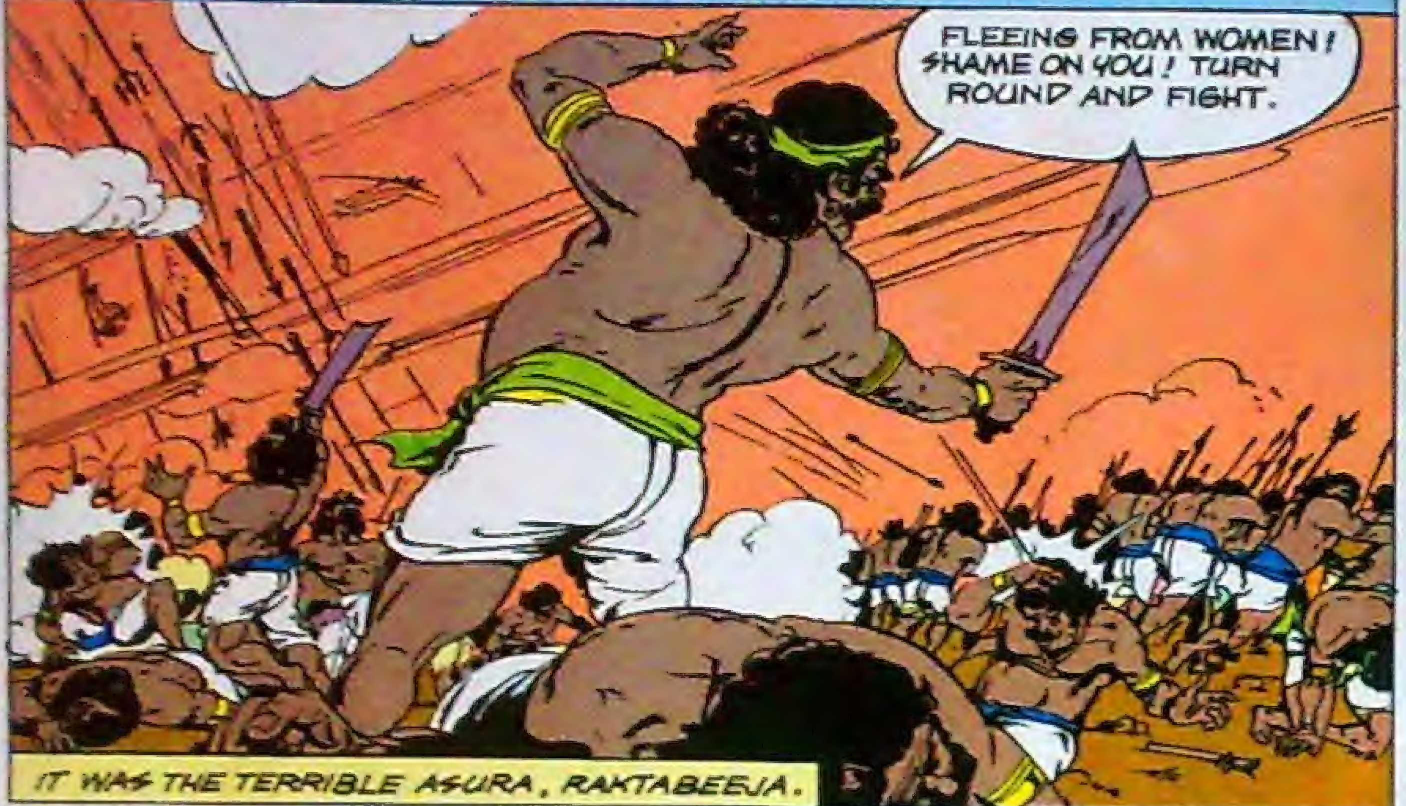




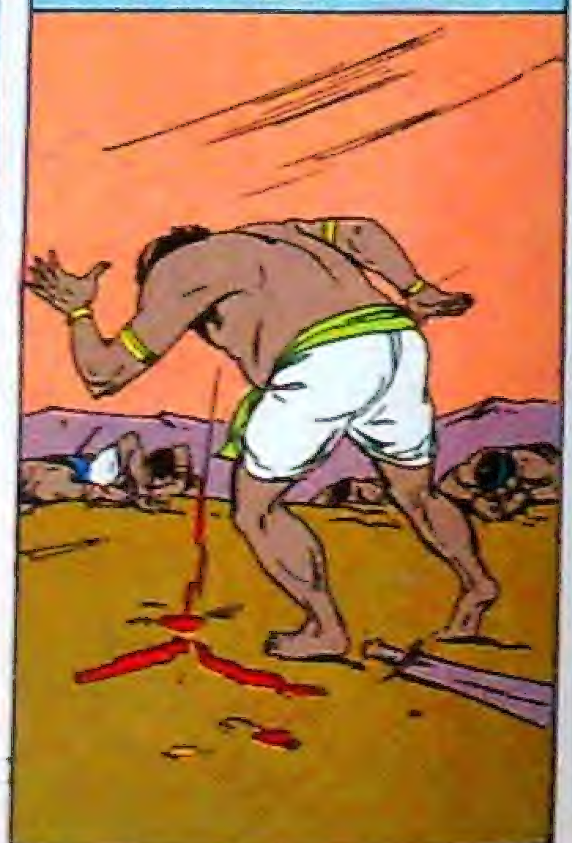




* SHAKTI = ENERGY


VAISHNAVI FOUGHT WITH THE DISCUS , MAHESHWARI WITH THE TRIDENT, AND VARIOUS OTHER SHAKTIS WITH THEIR RESPECTIVE WEAPONS. UNABLE TO FACE THIS ONSLAUGHT, THE ASURAS BEGAN TO FLEE.
FLEEING FROM WOMEN! SHAME ON YOU! TURN ROUND AND FIGHT.
IT WAS THE TERRIBLE ASURA, RAKTABEEJA.

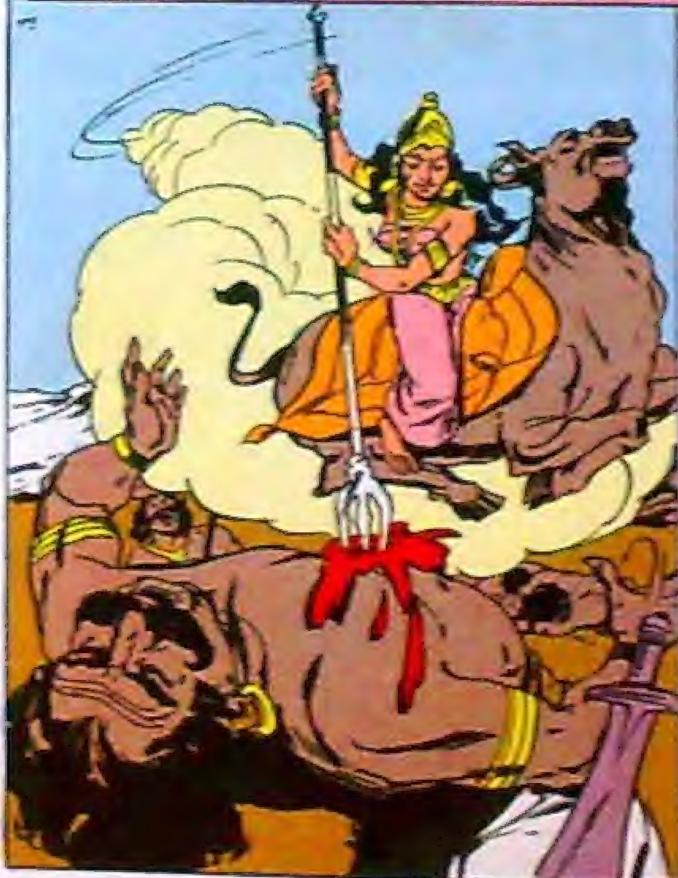

AS RAKTABEEJA RUSHED FORTH, INDRA'S SHAKTI STRUCK HIM WITH HER THUNDERBOLT.


AS EACH DROP OF THE BLOOD FLOWING FROM HIS WOUND TOUCHED THE GROUND...





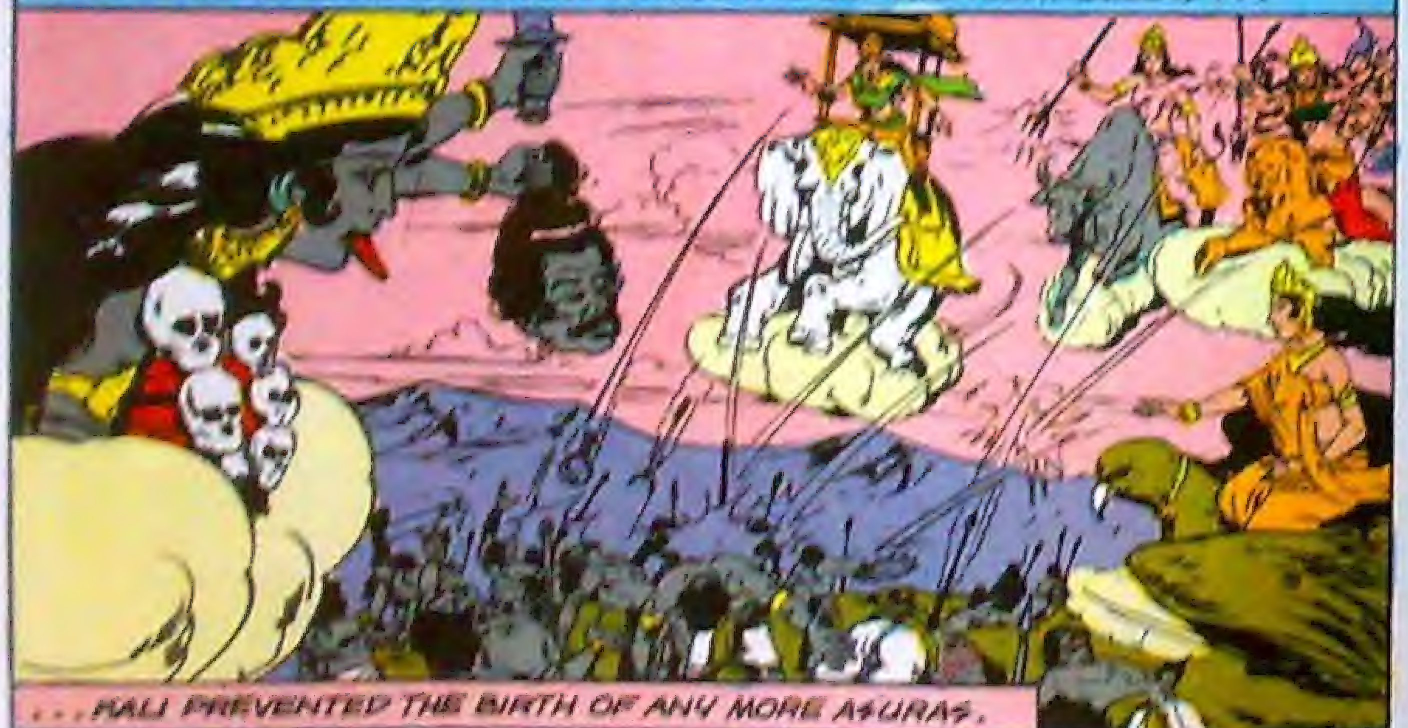
AS THE SHAKTIS WOUNDED EACH OF THE ASURAS THUS BORN, OUT OF HIS BLOOD ROSE MANY MORE ASURAS . . .






...AND SOON THE BATTLE SCENE WAS FILLED WITH THOUSANDS OF RAKTA-BEEJAS, WHO FOUGHT THE SHAKTIS.


CHANDIKA TURNED TO KALI.
O CHAMUNDI, THESE RAKTA-BEEJAS CAN BE ANNIHILATED ONLY IF WE PREVENT THEIR BLOOD FROM FALLING TO THE GROUND.
LEAVE IT TO ME. NOT A DROP OF THEIR BLOOD SHALL STAIN THE EARTH AGAIN.


AS CHANDIKA AND THE OTHER SHAKTIS ATTACKED THE RAKTABEEJAS...
...KALI PREVENTED THE BIRTH OF ANY MORE ASURAS.


SOON THE HUNDREDS AND THOUSANDS OF RAKTABEEJAS THAT HAD ARISEN WERE WIPED OUT. RAKTABEEJA WAS FURIOUS.
I MUST KILL HER BEFORE SHE STRIKES THE FATAL BLOW.


AND RAKTABEEJA RUSHED TOWARDS CHANDIKA.


AS CHANDIKA STRUCK HIM . . .
. . . KALI PREVENTED HIS BLOOD FROM TOUCHING THE EARTH . . .


. . . AND RAKTABEEJA FELL DEAD, TO THE JOY OF THE DEVAS.
VICTORY TO CHANDIKA !


YOU ALONE ARE CAPABLE OF KILLING HER.
I'LL TAKE HER ON, BROTHER!


BUT THE MOST POWERFUL ASURA,
ALAS! MY BROTHER IS DEAD!


O DURGA, THERE IS NO GLORY IN YOUR VICTORY. HELPED BY OTHERS, YOU'VE DESTROYED MY MEN...

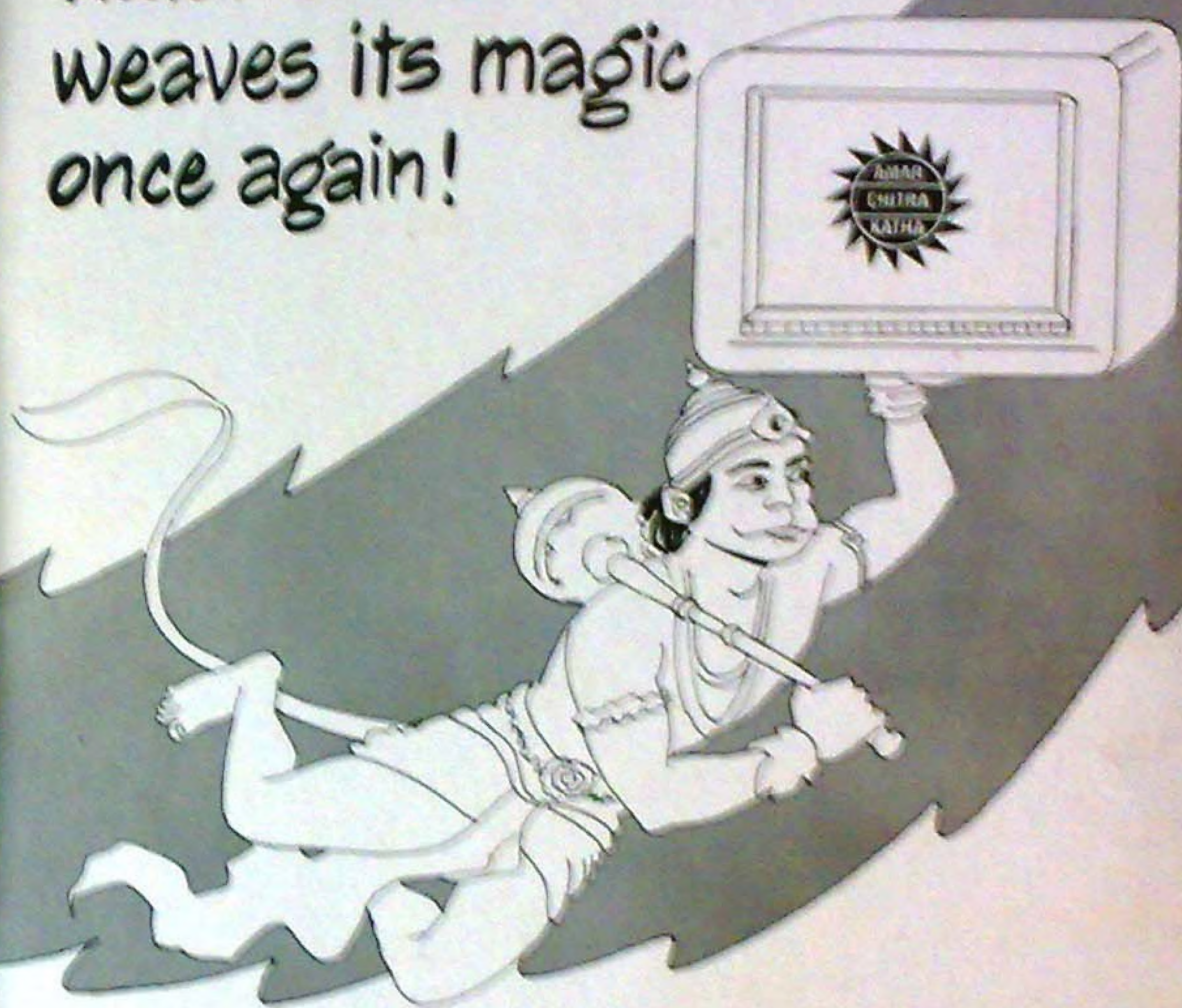

I AM ALONE. THE YOU SEE ARE BUT DIFFERENT FORMS OF MYSELF.


THEN TO THE AMAZEMENT OF SHUMBHA, THE VARIOUS SHAKTIS MERGED INTO DURGA.


SEIZING DURGA, SHUMBHA ROSE INTO THE SKY.


AFTER A FIERCE BATTLE IN MID-AIR, DURGA FLUNG THE ASURA DOWN ...


... AND SLEW HIM WITH HER SPEAR. REJOICING, THE DEVAS HEADED BY INDRA APPEARED ON THE SCENE.
WE SALUTE YOU, O MOTHER DURGA, DESTROYER OF EVIL.

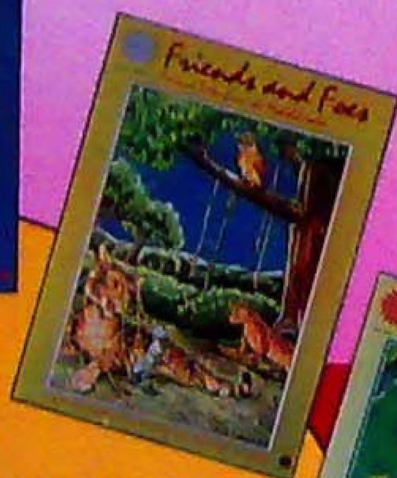


Amar Chitra Katha weaves its magic once again!
AMAR CHITRA KATHA













AMAR CHITRA KATHA

The Glorious Heritage of India

MYTHOLOGY • HISTORY • LEGEND

In special editions: Rs 25 each

501 KRISHNA
502 HANUMAN
503 THE SONS OF RAMA
504 RAMA
505 THE GITA
506 SHIVA PARVATI
507 NALA DAMAYANTI
508 CHANAKYA
509 GANESHA
510 BUDDHA
511 SAVITRI
512 TALES OF VISHNU
513 HANUMAN TO THE RESCUE
514 TALES OF DURGA
515 GANGA
516 KRISHNA AND RUKMINI
517 VIVEKANANDA
518 KRISHNA AND JARASANDHA
519 ELEPHANTA
520 TALES OF NARADA
521 ANGULIMALA
522 KRISHNA AND NARAKASURA
523 RAMAN OF TENALI
524 INDRA AND SHIBI
525 TALES OF ARJUNA
526 MAHIRAVANA
527 BHEEMA AND HANUMAN
528 KUMBHAKARNA
529 KARTIKEYA
530 SHAKUNTALA
531 KARNA
532 SUDAMA
533 ABHIMANYU
534 BHEESHMA
535 MIRABAI
536 ASHOKA
537 PRAHLAD
538 THE CHURNING OF THE OCEAN
539 RANI OF JHANSI
540 PANCHATANTRA - THE JACKAL AND THE WAR DRUM
541 THE LORD OF LANKA
542 DRAUPADI
543 JATAKA TALES - MONKEY STORIES
544 SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE
545 BIRBAL THE WISE
546 VALI
547 GARUDA
548 RABINDRANATH TAGORE
549 TALES OF SHIVA
550 SATI AND SHIVA
551 TULSIDAS
552 TANSEN
553 JATAKA TALES - JACKAL STORIES
554 JATAKA TALES - ELEPHANT STORIES
555 JATAKA TALES - DEER STORIES
556 HITOPADESHA - CHOICE OF FRIENDS
557 BIRBAL THE WITTY
558 BIRBAL THE CLEVER
559 BIRBAL THE JUST
560 PANCHATANTRA - HOW THE JACKAL ATE THE ELEPHANT
561 PANCHATANTRA - CROWS AND OWLS
562 PANCHATANTRA - THE BRAHMIN AND THE GOAT
563 RANA PRATAP
564 SHIVAJI
565 DRONA
566 SURYA
567 INDRA AND SHACHI
568 VIKRAMADITYA
569 MALAVIKA
570 DASHARATHA
571 DHRUVA AND ASHTAVAKRA
572 ANCESTORS OF RAMA
573 JATAKA TALES - BIRD STORIES
574 JATAKA TALES THE MAGIC CHANT
575 JATAKA TALES - THE GIANT AND THE DWARF
576 JATAKA TALES - THE MOUSE MERCHANT
577 HARISCHANDRA
578 PARASHURAMA
579 VALMIKI
580 BIRBAL THE INIMITABLE
581 RAMAN THE MATCHLESS WIT
582 MAHABHARATA
583 PANCHATANTRA - THE GREEDY MOTHER-IN-LAW
584 GOPAL THE JESTER
585 PANCHATANTRA - THE DULLARD AND OTHER STORIES
586 JATAKA TALES - STORIES OF WISDOM
587 BIRBAL THE GENIUS
588 GURU GOBIND SINGH
589 KRISHNA AND SHISHUPALA
590 GURU NANAK
591 THE SYAMANTAKA GEM
592 GHATOTKACHA
593 THE PANDAVAS IN HIDING
594 MAHAVIRA
595 SRI RAMAKRISHNA
596 RAJA BHOJA
597 TALES OF SHIVAJI
598 VIKRAMADITYA'S THRONE
599 VISHWAMITRA
600 KALIDASA
601 SAI BABA
602 THE QUICK-WITTED BIRBAL
603 AKBAR
604 PRITHVIRAJ CHAUHAN
605 PADMINI
606 RANI DURGAVATI
607 A BAG OF GOLD COINS
608 BHAGAT SINGH
609 FRIENDS AND FOES - ANIMAL TALES FROM THE MAHABHARATA
610 RAVANA HUMBLED
611 BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR
612 URVASHI
613 SOORDAS
614 JATAKA TALES - TRUE FRIENDS
615 JATAKA TALES - STORIES OF COURAGE
616 JATAKA TALES - TALES OF MISERS
617 THE HIDDEN TREASURE - A JATAKA TALE
618 BIRBAL TO THE RESCUE
619 JATAKA TALES – NANDIVISHALA
620 HITOPADESHA - HOW FRIENDS ARE PARTED
621 UDAYANA
622 THE TIGER AND THE WOODPECKER
623 KABIR
624 DAYANANDA
625 BATTLE OF WITS
626 THE PANDAVA PRINCES
627 HARSHA
628 RAMANA MAHARSHI
629 ULOOPI
630 RANA SANGA
631 CHAITANYA MAHAPRABHU
632 VIDYASAGAR
633 TALES OF MARYADA RAMA
634 CHANDRAGUPTA MAURYA
635 AMRAPALI
636 KRISHNADEVA RAYA
637 YAYATI
638 KING SHALIVAHANA
639 KRISHNA AND THE FALSE VASUDEVA
640 PAURAVA AND ALEXANDER
641 GOPAL AND THE COWHERD
642 SHAH JAHAN
643 RATNAVALI
644 GANDHARI
645 LOKMANYA TILAK
646 THE PANDIT AND THE MILKMAID – TALES TOLD BY RAMAKRISHNA
647 LAL BAHADUR SHASTRI
648 SAMUDRA GUPTA
649 TALES FROM THE UPANISHADS
650 MAHATMA GANDHI - THE EARLY DAYS
651 THE ADVENTURES OF BADDU & CHHOTU
652 ARUNI AND UTTANKA – TALES FROM THE MAHABHARATA
653 JAYADRATHA
654 TALES OF BALARAMA
655 ANAND MATH
656 ADI SHANKARA
657 VASANTASENA
658 JAHANGIR
659 DEVI CHOUDHURANI
660 AJATASHATRU
661 KACHA AND DEVAYANI
662 THE LEARNED PANDIT – TALES TOLD BY SRI RAMAKRISHNA
663 ANIRUDDHA – A TALE FROM THE BHAGAWAT
664 KING KUSHA – A BUDDHIST TALE
665 THE DEADLY FEAST – A BUDDHIST TALE
666 KANNAGI – BASED ON A TAMIL CLASSIC
667 BIKAL THE TERRIBLE - FOLKTALES FROM MADHYA PRADESH
668 THE ACROBAT – BUDDHIST TALES
669 ASHVINI KUMARS – TALES FROM THE VEDAS
670 THE GOLDEN MONGOOSE — TALES FROM THE MAHABHARATA
671 THE COWHERD OF ALAWI - BUDDHIST TALES
672 THE PRICELESS GEM – A JATAKA TALE
673 AYYAPPAN